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ABSTRACT

The literature on college faculty in 1996 has increased; however, two themes described in the practice literature--identifying and rewarding exemplary teaching and experimental pedagogies--are only minimally represented in the research literature. The Carnegie Foundation, the American Association for Higher Education, and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, have addressed the topic of identifying and rewarding exemplary teaching. Experimental pedagogies are represented in the literature as techniques faculty should use, but empirical research about their benefits is minimal. Other areas reveal an overlap between research and practice; major themes include college faculty workload and productivity; assessment; restructuring and the accompanying reduction of faculty; tenure; faculty role or identity; and diversity. Key issues in the research are those related to public perception of higher education and the cost of higher education, with issues relating to student outcomes and learning receiving less attention. Assessment is a prevalent issue, although a gap is apparent between administrator and faculty views of and beliefs about assessment. Another gap is found in the literature on restructuring. The literature on tenure remains historical or theoretical, with little empirical research; literature on the changing role of faculty follows the attention given to workload, assessment, restructuring, and tenure. Related to public accountability is research on diversity-related issues. (Contains 27 references.) (JM)

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Higher Education Trends (1997-1999): Faculty

Adrianna J. Kezar

ED 435 344

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Higher Education Trends (1997-1999)
Faculty

by Adrianna J Kezar

The amount of literature produced about college faculty in 1996 increased from prior years. Many research themes were mirrored in practice, but two themes described in the practice literature are minimally represented in the research and represent a gap in the research literature:

1. *Identifying and rewarding exemplary teaching*
2. *Experimental pedagogies, such as service learning.*

The Carnegie Foundation, the American Association for Higher Education, and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education have addressed the topic of identifying and rewarding exemplary teaching (Long; Zemsky). These three organizations, as well as individual institutions, have developed programs that publish standards for excellent teaching, conduct workshops and seminars, and work closely with faculty development organizations to more effectively promote the functions and role of teaching. Other organizations, such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities, are attempting to promote teaching among graduate students who will soon enter the profession. Little research has been done on the results or impact of these efforts. An exception is an edition of *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, which is devoted to "honoring exemplary teaching." In this edition, Mardee Jenrette and Karen Hays conducted a survey of 346 academic officers at two-year colleges, investigating the ways in which faculty are honored and selected for recognition and perceived institutional benefits of teaching awards.

Experimental pedagogies are represented in the literature as techniques faculty should use, but empirical research about their benefits is minimal (Alley and Repp). Robert Bringle and Julie Hatcher describe a framework for integrating service learning into the curriculum, but the literature includes little research on the outcomes of service learning. Researchers should commit themselves to studying these new forms of instruction to help inform faculty about the implementation, benefits, and outcomes of innovation.

Other areas reveal an overlap between research and practice, with the major themes for college faculty workload and productivity; assessment; restructuring departments, schools, or colleges and the accompanying reduction of faculty; tenure; role or identity; and diversity, including sexual harassment and the impact of raising children on academic careers. Several of these themes are interrelated; for example, workload and productivity, restructuring, tenure, assessment, and role or identity are all related to cost concerns and accountability in higher education. The key issues of the research appear to be those related to the public's perception of higher education and the cost of higher education. Unfortunately, those issues that relate to student outcomes and learning, such as new pedagogies or approaches to learning and teaching, are not receiving the requisite attention.

Workload and Productivity

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Attention to faculty workload and productivity is a growing trend in the literature. Daniel Layzell has reviewed the literature on faculty workload and productivity from four perspectives: defining and measuring workload and productivity; the status of research on workload and productivity; state legislation, policies, and related activities; and explanations for the perceived decline in academic productivity. This type of summary of the existing literature is particularly important, not only for developing policy, but also for identifying gaps in our understanding. This issue is particularly important, as legislators appear interested in developing policy. The *NEA Almanac* summarizes the issue in an article that is helpful for policy makers (Wechsler). Other studies examine differences in productivity and factors that might affect productivity, in particular, differences by gender, race, and rank (Francis, E. Aracelis; R. Blackburn; J. Schiele; F. Tien; Vasil). The majority of the research focuses on productivity in research rather than, for example, on balancing teaching, research, and service. Productivity and teaching are mostly discussed in the nonempirical research (Cameron). We need more research on factors that impact teaching and service productivity and on balancing the three faculty roles.

Assessment

Assessment appears to be the next most prevalent theme. Some literature on identifying exemplary teaching and assessment overlaps. For example, Kenneth Feldman describes the relationship between improving teaching and assessment in two different publications: "Identifying Exemplary Teaching: Using Data from Course and Teacher Evaluations" and *Taking Teaching Seriously*. Students' evaluations are receiving more attention as an area of research (Civian and Brennan). Some of the more exciting literature on assessment, on "programs that work," is coming from practice. For example, Catherine Chambliss examines efforts by the Department of Psychology at Ursinus College in Pennsylvania to realign its guidelines for evaluation, promotion, and tenure, with the emphasis increasingly on student-centered instruction at the college. The literature focuses on the need to link rewards for faculty with students' achievement and to give faculty more input in the college's guidelines for evaluation, promotion, and tenure. Rowland Eustace's article in *Higher Education Review* chronicles the evolution in Great Britain of an external, standardized testing system to promote consistency in achievement standards. As U.S. higher education moves toward an emphasis on assessment and external standards, it is important to refer to the research conducted in countries that have undertaken this process. This international research can also serve as a basis for forming research questions. A gap is apparent between administrators' and faculty members' views of and beliefs about assessment. Research and literature examining and attempting to bridge this gap would be helpful if assessment is to move forward and if institutions are to successfully assess outcomes.

Restructuring

A similar gap can be found in the literature on restructuring; a distinct tension exists between the faculty's and administrators' viewpoints. Faculty argue that teaching and learning, students, and their professional identity are being ignored, while governing boards and administrators argue that some fundamental questions must be addressed, such as what and how students should learn, equitable faculty teaching loads, the quality and definition of research, and the role of tenure in promoting institutional mission (Nixon; Phipps). Robert Zemsky's report, although not based on empirical research, pulls together practical ideas for restructuring departments that might be helpful for institutions. His definition of an effective department is a department comprising a team of scholars whose primary responsibility is teaching and learning. Renewal of undergraduate education is seen as depending on institutions' and departments' making such changes as fostering a greater commitment to teamwork, making effective teaching a subject of collective dialogue and inquiry, making a greater commitment to quality control, and ensuring the presence of a strong and decisive department chair.

Tenure

Related to restructuring is the topic of modifying or abolishing tenure. The literature on

tenure remains historical or theoretical in nature, as little empirical research has been conducted to support arguments for or against tenure (Cotter; Trachtenberg; Weingartner). Clearly, we need empirical research on the benefits of tenure and the impact of the process of granting tenure to supplement these other arguments. A few institutions and states have released reports about ways they are reevaluating criteria for tenure. No comprehensive study looked at trends in the reevaluation of tenure at an institutional or state level in 1996, which could indicate a gap in the literature.

Changing Roles

With the attention to workload and productivity, assessment, restructuring, and tenure comes a significant amount of literature on identifying, defining, and understanding the new role of faculty. For example, "The Teacher as Examiner" explores how faculty members' roles change with assessment, the introduction of new instructional practices, the move away from tenure and less autonomy, changes in the emphasis of research, and the restructuring of departments or the structure of knowledge (Eustace; see also Child and Williams, and Moxley). The article suggests that changes in faculty priorities, evaluation, and career path lead to less autonomy and prestige. Others argue that, although faculty members' roles are changing, the concern over prestige and autonomy is unfounded. A particularly strong resource on this topic is James Fairweather's *Faculty Work and Public Trust: Restoring the Value of Teaching and Public Service in American Academic Life*, a compilation of research on the changing role of faculty and faculty workload and productivity as related to tenure, accountability, assessment, and restructuring. Other areas for future research include the impact of cyberspace on the role of faculty, electronic journals, e-mail communities, and chat rooms for professional organizations, which are all surely affecting the nature of faculty work (Turnbull). More research is needed to understand the outcomes of these changes in the faculty role on student learning and the institution.

Diversity

Another theme, related to accountability to the public, is the research on diversity-related issues among college faculty. For example, Eric Dey et al. examine sexual harassment in academe, illustrating the need to create a more gender-aware environment, as sexual harassment remains a significant problem for women faculty. Susan Kolker Finkel and Steven Olswang's study, however, found that over 40 percent of women assistant professors in a recent survey (n = 124) identified publishing, teaching, committees, and "time required by children" as serious impediments to achieving tenure, many more than reported sexual harassment and sexism as serious obstacles. Policy changes that will accommodate women professors' time commitments to children and alleviate sexual harassment are still clearly needed. Another work, by Latika Vasil for *Journal of Higher Education*, examines gender differences in self-efficacy beliefs in academic careers and its relationship to advancement in one's career. Males were found to be significantly more confident than females in social process skills before controlling for experience, academic rank, field, and institution. Self-efficacy in social processes explains some variance in research productivity. The ASHE Reader on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education (Turner et al.) is a key addition to the higher education literature; this compilation of articles provides a historical overview and presents research on multicultural curricula, teaching and learning, and issues for underrepresented faculty. A strong research base is beginning to look at faculty as a diverse group with special needs, and it is an important improvement in the research. A meta-analysis that provides a broad picture of what we know about faculty as a result of all these studies would be helpful.

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